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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 000749

SIPDIS

NSC FOR TSHANNON AND CBARTON
USCINSO ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS USAID FOR DCHA/OTI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/05/2014

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SUBJECT: OAS AND CARTER CENTER PUT PRESSURE ON GOV

CLASSIFIED BY: DCM STEPHEN G. MCFARLAND FOR REASON 1.4(D)

SUMMARY:

1. (C) CARTER CENTER REPRESENTATIVE MATTHEW HODES TOLD THE AMBASSADOR MARCH 4 THAT FORMER PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER AND OAS SYG CESAR GAVIRIA WOULD PULL THEIR MISSIONS OUT OF VENEZUELA IF THE GOV INSISTS ON UNWORKABLE RULES FOR THE PROPOSED APPEALS PROCESS (REPARO). CNE DIRECTOR JORGE RODRIGUEZ WANTS TO FIND AN AGREEMENT, BUT IT IS UNCLEAR WHAT INSTRUCTIONS HE RECEIVED FROM CHAVEZ. MIRANDA STATE GOVERNOR MENDOZA AND FELIPPE MUJICA (PREMERO JUSTICIA) ARE NEGOTIATING ON BEHALF OF THE OPPOSITION, BUT THEY ALSO MUST NEGOTIATE WITH THE OPPOSITION TO SELL WHATEVER DEAL THEY STRIKE. THE PARTIES ARE SCHEDULED TO MEET AGAIN MARCH 5. END SUMMARY.

CARTER AND GAVIRIA READY TO WALK

2. (C) DURING DINNER WITH THE AMBASSADOR MARCH 4, CARTER CENTER REPRESENTATIVE MATTHEW HODES SAID THAT BOTH FORMER PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER AND OAS SYG CESAR GAVIRIA WOULD PULL THEIR MISSIONS OUT OF VENEZUELA IF THE GOV INSISTS ON UNWORKABLE RULES FOR THE PROPOSED PRESIDENTIAL REFERENDUM SIGNATURES APPEALS PROCESS (REPARO). HODES UNDERSTANDS THE INHERENT CONFLICT BETWEEN THE ROLE OF THE OAS/CARTER CENTER AS FACILITATORS OF NEGOTIATIONS AND THEIR ROLE AS OBSERVERS. AS FACILITATORS, HODES SAID ONE NEVER WANTS TO WALK AWAY FROM A NEGOTIATION SO LONG AS THE PARTIES ARE WILLING TO CONTINUE. AS OBSERVERS, THEY WILL HAVE TO ISSUE A REPORT ON THEIR FINDINGS. HE SAID CARTER AND GAVIRIA BOTH BELIEVE THAT THE OBSERVER ROLE TRUMPS THE NATURAL INCLINATION TO KEEP DIALOGUE GOING.

NEGOTIATIONS: CNE AND OPPOSITION IN TOUGH POSITIONS

3. (C) HODES TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL (CNE) DIRECTOR JORGE RODRIGUEZ SEEMS PERSONALLY INTERESTED IN FINDING RULES FOR THE APPEALS PROCESS THAT WILL BE MUTUALLY AGREEABLE. HOWEVER, HODES SAID, RODRIGUEZ IS OBVIOUSLY TAKING INSTRUCTIONS FROM MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE DIOSDADO CABELLO AND PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ AND IT IS UNCLEAR WHAT INSTRUCTIONS RODRIGUEZ HAS. HODES NOTED THAT WHILE MIRANDA STATE GOVERNOR ENRIQUE MENDOZA AND FELIPE MUJICA (MOVEMENT TO SOCIALISM) SAY THEY ARE NEGOTIATING ON BEHALF OF THE OPPOSITION, IN REALITY THEY HAVE TO FIRST NEGOTIATE WITH RODRIGUEZ, THEN NEGOTIATE WITH THE OPPOSITION TO SELL WHATEVER DEAL THEY STRIKE.

4. (C) THE PARTIES ARE SCHEDULED TO MEET AGAIN MARCH 5 TO DISCUSS DETAILS FOR THE PROCESS AND WILL ALSO EXCHANGE DATA. THE CNE WAS TO GIVE THE OPPOSITION THE OFFICIAL CNE RESULTS AND DATA ON MARCH 4. THE OPPOSITION BELIEVES IT WILL TAKE AT LEAST TWO FULL DAYS TO ANALYZE THAT INFORMATION AND COMPARE IT TO DATA MAINTAINED BY SUMATE.

CARTER TELLS GOV TO RESPECT THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE

5. (C) HODES SAID THAT DURING A MEETING WITH FORMER PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER IN ATLANTA FEBRUARY 25, CARTER TOLD CABELLO THAT IT WAS ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE THAT FIFTY PERCENT OF THE SIGNATURES WERE ELIMINATED ON A TECHNICALITY, AND AN EX POST FACTO TECHNICALITY AT THAT, AND THAT THE WILL OF THE CITIZENRY SHOULD PREVAIL. CARTER SUGGESTED THAT IF CHAVEZ WOULD WIN A RECALL, THEN THE GOV SHOULD ALLOW ONE TO TAKE PLACE. CABELLO WOULD NOT BUDGE FROM HIS POSITION.

SHAPIRO

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